



City of Homer

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Office of the City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: April 7, 2022
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for April 11, 2022 Council Meeting

Barge Redoubt

On March 31st the barge Redoubt broke free from its moorings and drifted ashore in Mud Bay. This triggered calls from the public to the Harbormaster's office. The Harbormaster kept Coast Guard Sector Anchorage, Homer Dispatch, and my office updated as the situation unfolded. The tug Bob Franko and support vessel Allan G were able to work together to get the Redoubt moved back to deeper waters.



Food Truck Follow Up

Immediately after the passage of Ordinance 22-15(S)(A), staff began the transition of mobile food service (food truck) licensing from the Police Department to the Planning and Economic Development offices. We have compiled contact information for food trucks that have been licensed in Homer in the past few years and will be proactively reaching out with information on the updated code and fees. For the few food trucks that registered before the code change, I have staff offering refunds of the difference between the old and new license fees to ensure a fair starting point for the trucks doing business in Homer this year.

Short Term Rentals and Sales Tax

My office and the Finance Director have been collaborating on a public education flyer that will be mailed to all utility customers regarding sales tax for rentals. Short term rentals are subject to sales tax on a per-unit, per-night basis. The taxes collected must be remitted to the Kenai Peninsula Borough. We are in the process of sharing a draft with KPB sales tax division staff to ensure that it is accurate and does not conflict with any information provided by the Borough. If all parties can agree on content, expect to see it in mailboxes with

water/sewer bills at the end of April. Regarding the larger discussion about short term rentals and the impacts they create on the City, I am working with Planning and Economic Development on the topic and intend to come to Council with a proposed pathway for addressing this issue in a comprehensive manner at a future meeting.

Kachemak Way Sewer Repair

Update from the Public Works Director regarding the recent road closure and sewer repair project on Kachemak Way: *It pays to have a Plan B when you go out of town! This is the lesson a homeowner on Kachemak Way learned recently. The fellow who was looking after the house noticed sewage starting to back up in the house. He called Public Works, who after investigating the situation, concluded the service line was broken, in the road way, making it the City's responsibility. The operators mobilized traffic control to close the road to through traffic and a large excavator to dig up the service line. The water/sewer crew found two separate cracks in the service line, repaired them, and turned the site back to the operators who filled in the hole, cleaned up the site and got traffic moving again the same day. The homeowner came back to a happy and healthy house.*

Main Street Sidewalk – It's Time!

The design for the Main Street Sidewalk is complete and we're advertising the project for bid. Bids will be due May 2, 2022, and brought to the City Council for contract award on May 9. We're projecting construction will start in early June and be complete by October 31st. The project will install an asphalt sidewalk on the west side of Main Street from the Homer Theatre to Dehl Avenue, by Bayview Park. The project will include ADA ramps at all intersections, ADA access to Bayview Park and storm drain upgrades.

Coast Guard City Planning

The City's relationship to the Coast Guard is very important and there is a strong desire to strengthen that relationship over the coming years. At the visioning session in March, pursuit of a Coast Guard City designation was identified as a future project. Christine Drais, Assistant to the City Manager, and Councilmember Venuti met April 1st to start talking about the process of become a Coast Guard City and ways the City and other local stakeholders can work together to make Homer a great homeport for those stationed here.

Burn Regulations

Fire Chief Kirko and I met with Councilmembers Venuti and Aderhold to discuss issues connected to burning within city limits. We are evaluating existing code and permit conditions to see how they can be modernized to better serve the community. I anticipate an extended public engagement process that may be integrated into the building code and code enforcement discussions that were a high priority for Council at the visioning in March.

State Approval of Homer as Official Early Voting Site

Update from the City Clerk: *In past State elections, Homer City Hall has served as an Absentee in Person polling site for the two weeks prior to each election. What this means is voters come in and complete an absentee in person affidavit envelope, are issued a ballot, the voted ballot is sealed its envelope, and batches of envelopes with voted ballots are mailed daily to Juneau. Once in Juneau the envelopes are reviewed, voter registration is verified, cross checks are completed to ensure the absentee voter didn't vote on election day, and then those ballots are counted and included in the final count that gets certified. Over the last several years the number of absentee in person voters has increased significantly in Homer and our Region 1 Director requested that Homer be added as an Early Voting Site. What this change means is that when voters come in during the two weeks prior to election day, they will check in with the election official who will pull up their information and print an affidavit form for the voter to sign affirming that they are a registered voter and that their information is correct. The voter*

will then be issued a ballot that will be counted by the optical scan unit that's on site, just like on election day. Those counts will then be transmitted to Juneau and be included in the election day results. If a voter comes to vote early and their voter registration information is incorrect, then they will be asked to use the absentee in person voting method, and their absentee in person affidavit envelope will be used to update their voter registration through the State system. The Clerk's office is very excited about this change! Please feel free to call us at 907-235-3130 with questions, and if we don't have the answer, we'll help you find it. The deadline to update your voter registration for the June 11th State Special Election is May 15th. Voter registration is available at the City Clerk's Office, the Homer Public Library, and online at elections.alaska.gov. You will also find a helpful video at that web address that explains Ranked Choice Voting. If you're interested in serving as an election official in the 2022 elections please contact the Clerk's office.

Grant Symposium and Lobbying Efforts

Senator Murkowski's office is hosting a federal grants symposium in Anchorage April 11th and 12th. The City's grant specialist, Special Project Coordinator Jenny Carroll, and Harbormaster Bryan Hawkins will be attending the symposium to gather valuable information for the City. They are also tentatively scheduled to make a brief trip to Juneau to reconnect with some legislators regarding City priorities.



April 1, 2022

City of Homer
491 E. Pioneer Ave
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Mayor Castner, City Council, and City Staff,

This letter serves as our quarterly report for the period January 1st to March 31st, 2022. The Homer Business Advisor, Robert Green, has been busy this quarter working with clients gearing up for what should be a record-setting summer. Entrepreneurs in Homer have really appreciated having a business advisor on site, who is an expert in the community. In the absence of a Homer Business Advisor in 2019, the Alaska SBDC provided 156.5 advising hours to Homer clients, but surpassed that total in this quarter alone. Here is a summary of deliverables to the Homer community during the quarter:

Advising Hours: 184.7
Total Clients Advised: 57
New Businesses Started or Bought: 5
Jobs Supported: 237
Capital Infusion: \$183,500
Client Satisfaction Surveys: 91% positive

The contract rate for a business advisor is \$55 per hour, which includes salary, benefits, fixed, and administrative expenses. In addition to local expertise, the Alaska SBDC provides IBISWorld industry reports, retailing for \$925 each, and ProfitCents financial analyses, valued at \$2,750 each, to clients free of charge. Here is a summary of value provided to the Homer community during the quarter:

Business Advisor: \$27,335
IBISWorld Industry Reports: \$9,250
ProfitCents Financial Analyses: \$16,500
Total: \$53,085

We would like to thank the City of Homer for their support of the Homer Business Advisor position. Robert has been doing a great job with our clients in the Homer area and we feel this will be a beneficial partnership for years to come. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:


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Jon Bittner
Executive Director
Alaska SBDC